# Transcript

Karen

Hi and welcome to the Here here podcast. This is season 4. You're going to hear from really incredible young people who have lived in their family or themselves or whatever it is with hearing loss, and you're going to hear it from them of just what they think about it. What they've been through, what they. A you know, would advise other people about experiencing hearing loss and and working through some of those challenges and what worked and what didn't.

Sophia

Hi everyone. My name is Sophia. I am a research coordinator in Toronto at the Hospital for Sick Children. My connection to the team is that I have bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and wear a cochlear implant on my right side.

Annika

Hi everyone. My name is Annika. I'm in my second year studying Health Science at Western University, and my connection to hearing loss is my brother has hearing loss. He has a hearing aid in one ear and a cochlear implant in the other ear.

May

Hi everyone my name is May. I'm a second year undergrad at the University of British Columbia. I was born with single sided deafness and I was a 10 year patient at Sick Kids Hospital.

Maryam

Hey, hello everyone. My name is Maryam. I'm actually a medical student at Western University. My connection to hearing loss is that I have bilateral hearing impairment and where the implant on my left side.

Nimrat

Hi so my name is Nimrat. I joined this team because I am a person. with cochlear implants and I'm a second year at the University of Waterloo.

Maria

Thanks Maria. I am a second year audiology student and my younger brother is a bilateral cochlear implant user who got me interest in the field of audiology.

Karen

You're all just amazing examples of of people who are overcoming, you know, an extra challenge during childhood and how you're succeeding and thriving in life. But that does come. With effort and I know you have all talked about that effort as fatigue. People listening may not understand that it can be hard to listen.

Sophia

For me, the way I define hearing fatigue is. That my brain is taking on a significant cognitive load when I'm trying to have conversations with people. I mean, for me it presents not only a noisy environments, it's definitely worse than noisy environments, but it's also in quiet environments too. Even the smallest of sounds can irritate me, and as I've gotten older. I've been able to actually articulate into. Words no, I just need some personal time. I call it like this is my quiet time. This is my me time. And you know, if you wanna talk to me during my me time, I will read your lips. But I'm not putting it on right now.

May

I can remember. Playing hide and seek with my family and I was a Finder.

Sophia

It was really.

May

Hard to find them and the interesting thing was they would actually say like I'm here. I'm here. But like I couldn't, I still couldn't find them, so I. They didn't have any sense of direction, and even when you know someone in the house says like, oh, I'm here, I wouldn't be able to really tell unless they literally stay. I'm in the basement. I'm in the kitchen, that kind of stuff. So that was kind of one of the earlier signs. That something was like. A little off.

Karen

Did you all have itinerant teachers?

Nimrat

I had mine from grade one to grade 12 and I was not nice to her like now I realized she did almost everything for me like even though she knew how awkward I was and how insecure I was. Looking back then, I was just kind of really insecure. And second, I don't want anyone to think ohh like I'm leaving the classroom to meet a teacher like I don't want anyone to think less of me as a student because then I love my teachers. A lot of rumors.

Maryam

I think maybe going to school in Toronto, where maybe like a lot of kids in your class that can sometimes fly under the radar, but the manner of which I was being pulled out of class such that they would call me down from the office, that would be over the announcement system. I definitely have sometimes intervene and be like, hey, like instead of calling me down. And I just pop out of the class on my own. I'll meet you in the hallway. And then that way, the kids won't give me a hard time about it. We say ohh, man, I'm getting. Called into the office.

Maria

They finally, like, put him into a regular classroom and I believe he did have like a support person in the classroom because he would often come home and he's just like, yeah, class is fine. How was? How was everything else? OK, that's all. Oh, my God of him. But in terms of like, the sibling side of things and like, supporting him in his. Education. Mostly. It was just sitting down and making sure that he is OK again. He was not talkative well, so I guess for me he was just trying to make sure that he's just doing OK.

Annika

My brother is like a big, big music fan and with him he always has his music on very loud, very like a beat, like loud music and we always I I always hear him like blasting the music. Sometimes I'll be like turn it down, turn it down.

Maryam

Yeah, I definitely. And it have that as well. I I wonder if there's a correlation between hearing loss and an intense kindness for music, but definitely as I was a child growing up, music was my solace and I always had headphones on, even if I couldn't hear, like the headphones or whatever music was coming through.

Sophia

What helps me is if you're talking to me, say my name first, because that way my brain knows to pay attention to that specific person. It sounds so simple, but it really makes such a difference.

May

And I think in high school, there's kind of less support, maybe in elementary school or middle school, you'd have a teacher just come to you and visit you and ask, you know, how are things. But I think in high school it was mainly just like learning how to and becoming used to and. Becoming more comfortable with advocating for yourself and navigating like different like everyday life on your own. But I'm really thankful that I had really supportive teachers.

Annika

Like Sophia said, some people like they just aren't aware, you know? So like Sophia had a teacher for six months. They like. They weren't even aware that she was deaf. So it's like, definitely just go and, like, really commend you guys for, like, advocating for yourself. And I think that you guys probably had to learn to do that. Before other people.

Maryam

I've had to have multiple boundary talks with people and say, you know, you might think it's funny to make fun of me for my disability, but I'm not tolerating of that and I don't want it. I don't want to hear it around me and you know, like, if you're not going to change, then we shouldn't be friends. And ultimately sometimes you will lose. People, but most people are. I'm mature enough to recognize that this is wrong and I'm going to change and I don't want to lose this friendship, and it comes with time. It's not something I was able to do with the child. It wasn't something I did in high school or even I don't know, transition into into university. But it came with entering my 20s and then kind of progressed into mid 20s. And then you become more sure and confident of yourself and you realize you know, I don't accept this treatment. And I deserve better than this. And slowly but surely, like the people around you become much better at treating, treating you well and treating you with dignity.

May

I do play piano and I think in grade 11 I was able to obtain my Associates Diploma and piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music. So it was a pretty long and extensive journey. I think it's actually had like a huge impact on how I view my hearing loss and also how I've developed like. Abilities to adapt and kind of navigate. You typically think like you know, I was born with hearing loss. So it's kind of like my Achilles heel. But being able to go from that point of view and reach maybe like a degree of. Excellent. That's not typical is to me a way that I kind of prove to myself that. I was able to overcome my Achilles heel and it can be overcome and I can also do better than average.

Sophia

When I was born in 2001, the advice that was given to my mom was, you know, she won't be able to hear in water. So don't put her in swimming lessons. And because my mom is my mom, she ignored that advice and put me in swimming lessons from the age of two years old. And so I became. A really good swimmer and I was competitive swimming by 10 and I had done all of that without even being able to hear at all.

Annika

So I think for.

May

My situation it was kind of like my family was also learning with me. So because they've never really encountered this kind of condition, I think a lot of the times. As I was growing up, they also learned how the hearing loss affected me, and so I'm really grateful for like all their support throughout my childhood, and I thank the love and support that I received from everyone in my family, including my relatives. Has had a really positive impact on my self esteem and how I kind of deal with this disability.

Sophia

I don't know if there's traumatized her or not, but when I was diagnosed deaf, which I would have been 11 months old, so my sister would have been 6. Really close to 7. She's almost six years older than me and my mom sat her down and said, like, you're gonna have to take care of your sister in this world. You know, she's gonna need you. She won't hear things around her, and she needs you to guide her. You know what? She's just a baby. She can't hear anything. So just make sure you're looking out for her anyway. So my sister. With that very literally, and to this day, it still has those words in her. So basically like when we were young, she was essentially my team. There for I credit a lot of my speaking abilities, a lot of my hearing abilities and all of that to my family, because if it were not for them, I can't even. I would not be. Where I am today.

Maryam

I think a lot of kids often chose colorful colors for their ear molds and their devices, but I always got colors that blended in with my hair or my. And it was a sense of, like, secrecy in a way where my parents were just saying, you know, just try your best. You are like everyone else, you know, like you're not any different. But kids might give you a hard time if they see that you have devices that you have to go out of class and stop. And I really do appreciate your efforts to maintain it. You might keep. But a bit more closed off to the outside world. The reality is, is that it will always come out when you're playing the game of heads up, 7UP. And you don't put your head up. Everyone knows why, because you didn't hear or if you're getting in trouble at school because your teacher thinks that you're not paying attention and your grades are falling. People start to pick up on science, so you know, I don't know. I I think it's a very complicated thing because obviously my parents came from a really good place. But. I feel like if I were to have my own children now, they had. Difficulty hearing. I think the best way possible is to just embrace it. Be all out with it as much as you can, because it's not you that needs to adapt to the world, but sometimes the world needs. To adapt to you.

Hanne

It is a beautiful message. We want to end this special collection of some of the most inspiring moments of season 4. If you haven't already, we warmly invite you to explore the full episodes and hear more from these incredible young women. Their voices and reflections of a moving glimpse into their life with hearing loss. And the power of being truly hurt. Thank you for listening.